

Imperial authorities, upon the reluctant authorities of British Columbia—for, as I have shown, the people had already appealed to Canada for help—the negotiations for a Union proceeded. I will now read the "Terms" proposed by the Governor in Council of the Colony in more detail, and in official form, under those instructions and this pressure. I would call the particular attention of the House to those Terms as they were presented at Ottawa, especially the clause relating to internal transit, or "a trans-Continental road." I find it expressed in the official and formal propositions of the delegates sent to Ottawa in these words:

"8. Inasmuch as no real Unions can subsist between this Colony and Canada without the speedy establishment of communication across the Rocky Mountains by coach road and Railway, the Dominion shall, within three years from the date of Union, construct and open for traffic such coach road from some point on the line of the Main Trunk Road of this Colony to Fort Garry, of similar character to the said Main Trunk Road, and shall further engage to use all means in her power to complete such Railway communication at the earliest practicable date, and that the surveys to determine the proper line for such Railway, shall be at once commenced, and that a sum of not less than \$1,000,000 shall be expended in every year from and after three years from the date of Union, in actually constructing the initial sections of such Railway from the seaboard of British Columbia to connect with the Railway system of Canada."

On presenting those Terms at Ottawa, and discussing them with the Canadian Government, an alteration of this clause was proposed to the British Columbia delegates, with respect to the Railway, as follows:—

"The Government of the Dominion undertake to secure the commencement simultaneously within two years from the date of Union, of the construction of a Railway from the Pacific towards the Rocky Mountains, and from such point as may be selected east of the Rocky Mountains, towards the Pacific, to connect the seaboard of British Columbia with the Railway system of Canada; and further, to secure the completion of such Railway within ten years from the date of Union."

That condition or term in the Act of Union was a voluntary proposal of the Government of Canada. The Government of British Columbia proposed that we should undertake the construction of a Railway at the rate of \$1,000,000 a year, which, if the estimate of the Chief Engineer that it would cost \$100,000,000 be correct, would require 100 years

instead of ten to complete the Pacific Railway. My contention is, that, so far as this Parliament is concerned, we are not bound by the Terms of Union respecting the Railway in the absolute sense or to the extent which some hon. gentlemen even on this side of the House contend. It was a voluntary proposal of our own; a *nudum pactum* as lawyers would say, because we received no consideration for it. It is true the British Columbia delegates did not object to it. They were very glad to find that the people of Canada were so anxious to establish rapid transit across the continent. But that, like any other decision of Parliament, was subject to modification. The condition that the resources of the country would enable the Government to "secure the completion" of the work in ten years was always understood. Nay, more, it was expressly stipulated. We promised British Columbia, and we promised everybody, that we would build the Railway if we could. But Parliament did not deprive itself of its legal, natural, constitutional right to modify or repeal any law in the Statute-book, or any schemes or undertakings which might be found impracticable. British Columbia, being a part of the Dominion, can have no right to complain, unless it can show that we have the means, or that they are within our reach, and that it is to the interest of the country to proceed with the construction of the Railway in their Province. As members of this House, and representatives of a portion of the people of the Dominion, hon. gentlemen from British Columbia have the right to present their case in the best way they can. But to say that the transactions of 1871 are in the nature of a Treaty, that this Dominion consists of separate parts which have Treaty obligations one with another, and that we are bound at all hazards, and under all circumstances, whether we have the means or not, to carry out everything that a previous Parliament may have proposed in reference to public works in any Province—that proposition, Mr. Speaker, cannot be maintained; I, at all events, am not able to accept it. I come now to consider the position we are in to-day. We have undertaken the construction of this Railway. We have yielded to the demands of the members from British Co-